



# USAID | TAJIKISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## SUCCESS STORY

# Fighting Against TB through Skits

**Innovative methods educate Tajikistanis about tuberculosis.**



*During the play on TB awareness, performed in Rudaki region, Tajikistan  
Photo: Community Connections*

*Through theatre performances entire communities are being educated on a wide range of issues of TB detection and treatment.*

As Tajikistan's economy is struggling to recover from the breakup of the Soviet Union and the ensuing civil war, the country is facing a new challenge: the reemergence of tuberculosis (TB). Poor living conditions and high labor migration, compounded by serious deterioration of health services and increasing illiteracy, have led to high rates of the disease, especially among younger generation, and very little knowledge about its treatment or symptoms.

USAID alumni Mr. Abukhamedov, the Director of the Union of Physicians, Actors, and Sportsmen of Tajikistan is determined to increase TB awareness in his country so that more people can seek treatment and protect their families from this disease. After completing "Healthy Lifestyles Education" training in the U.S., organized by the USAID Community Connections program, Mr. Abdukhamedov decided to use his knowledge of theater to spread the word about TB.

Mr. Abdukhamedov developed a theater play "Life is Given Once" about TB and won a USAID-funded "World Without TB" grant to stage it. The play, performed by professional actors from the Lahuti Theater, has already been shown in Dushanbe and eleven rural communities of the Rudaki Region. Each showing gathered from 100-150 people audiences.

A professionally written script interweaves messages on TB causes and prevention into a real-life story about the daily life of a rural family. The skit suggests what can be done when loved ones are suffering from TB. Audiences also learn on how people can better care of themselves and their children and who can provide medical assistance free of charge.

"Theater performance as a method to promote knowledge on healthy lifestyle is more effective and understandable than reading books or watching TV," says Sulfiya Nozimova, head of the NGO "Bonuvoni Navovar". She saw the skit performed for students at school # 63 in Dushanbe and was impressed how the students are internalizing the information. "I was passing through the school and heard the conversation of school children. One boy was advising to his friend on how to contact doctor and what analysis should be taken in order to find out if one has TB or not."